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Psalm 27:1-9
 Successful Faith

+Love of the Father Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and Peace of the Holy Spirit be with you. +
 Amen+

I would like to start by sharing with you a story. One tribe of the Ethiopians had a unique way to train young braves. On the night of the boy's 13th birthday, he was placed in a dense forest to spend the entire night alone. Until then, he had never been away from the security of his family. But on this night he was blindfolded and taken miles away. When he took the blindfold off, he was in the middle of dense forest by himself all night long. Every time the wind blew, he wondered what scary sounds it masked. There is no doubt that this was a terrifying night for the young boy.

After such a scary and long night, the first rays of sunlight entered the interior of the forest. Looking around, the boy saw flowers, trees, and the outline of the path. Then, he saw the figure of a man standing just a few feet away, armed with a bow and an arrow. It was the boy's father. He had been there all night long. And this is how our Heavenly Father works. You might not be able to see Him with your eyes, but He is with you at all the times, protecting you, and loving you, and enabling you to face life's most difficult obstacles with confidence. Through your faith in God, you can know that you are never ever alone!

The Psalmist says, "The LORD is my light and my salvation." I understand what it means to walk in God's light. During my early ages we did not have electricity and sometimes we had to walk in the dark. Walking in the dark is scary. In my early days I felt like I couldn't bear it. Second Corinthians 1 verse 9 says, "*This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God...*" My parents and I learned how to fully trust in God. You need God to be your strong holds. You need God to hold you gently in his hand. When you respond to circumstances in faith your sense of hope becomes brighter. There is a power in faith. Faith in God that gives you hope and avoids all fear. Faith in God and not faith in ourselves.

When my faith in God is weak I start to become scared. The moment I stop looking up, I start going down. Sometimes the problem is with me saying my problems are too big, too hard, too complicated. Sometimes I feel that I am not strong enough or I am not up to the challenge. However, my success has nothing to do with my weakness. God is bigger than my lack of skill. He is not limited by my weakness. In our imperfection God shines through with love, the love He has had for us from the very beginning, and the same love he will always have for us. God is Love, and in Him there is no hate. It is good to know that someone loves us. Mother Teresa once said, "There are poor people everywhere, but the deepest poverty is not being loved." The Scripture is very clear that God loves us. He feels our pain. He weeps with us and He weeps for us...even to the point of coming down to this earth in order to **rescue** us. In order to save us from our misery, in order to give us a reason to live, a reason to hope, and knowing that we are not alone and we are loved. Sometimes accepting that love is a challenge. You must accept the fact that God loves you. When you accept that fact, your life begins to change in the most dramatic way and you will develop a new confidence and make the love of God a part of your life.

When you focus on God instead of your shortcomings, you can do whatever God calls you to do. Faith or fear is all about focus. When you choose faith, you have God's assurance that His power and presence is with you in all challenges.

David knew a lot about fear. He was often on the run for his life. One attack came after another. And yet through it all, David learned to overcome his fears by placing his trust in God. In verse 3, David says, "Though an army **besiege** me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident." Obviously, David's confidence did not come due to any absence of problems but, due to his trust and faith in God.

Life is not always smooth and sometimes we face difficulties and pains. Painful experiences help us to trust God more. I remember the time when I had a car accident in Ethiopia. We were driving on a rough and tough road. This type of road is a major cause of accidents there. Within a blink of an eye we found ourselves in a gorge under a bush. Our car was turned upside down and we were still inside. The windshield was broken; and all other parts of the car were twisted like a coke cane. There was no way to get out. I cried loudly to God for mercy. He stretched His saving arms out for us. There were no cuts on our bodies and we all came out well. Starting from that time my personal prayer life is ongoing conversation with God. It's informal and intimate. Sometimes our pains are for the reasons. You too may face difficulties in life. Some may be scary. However, you must not run from God. Instead run toward God.

In verse 1 of Psalm 27 David declares, "The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid?" David knew Who God is. He knew the character of God. He knew that God is the One who loves him; God is the one who is always faithful and true, and that is why he can fully trust him.

We have a God who is here for us. The New Testament confirms that Jesus is the exact imprint of God. Jesus stands with us. When I was a little boy there were big guys trying to kick me and bully me. Every time they try to treat me I would call my big brother Tamene to stop them up. I remember one time when he said to one of them, "*If you touch this young brother of mine again, I will never let you go free!*" So every time they tried to treat me badly I would tell them that I will call my big brother. It's really good to have somebody stand up for you when you are engaged in a challenge you can't manage. You must remember that it is your Lord Jesus Christ that stands up for you. Christ is your shield and protection from the enemy.

The psalmist requests the favor of the Lord; the continuance of his presence with him; the benefit of Divine guidance, and the benefit of Divine protection. God helps those who trust in Him. He is a better Friend than earthly parents are or can be. He is your Protector when you cannot see Him. He is your Light in times of darkness. All He desires is your faith and trust in Him. In God let us strengthen ourselves.

PRAYER: Father God, thank You for being a shield about us. Thank you for protecting us, sheltering us, defending us and being a screen for us.